

(12) UK Patent Application (19) GB (11) 2 384 097 (13) A

(43) Date of A Publication 16.07.2003

<p>(21) Application No 0129769.6</p> <p>(22) Date of Filing 13.12.2001</p>	<p>(51) INT CL⁷ G07F 17/34 17/32</p>
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(54) Abstract Title
Fruit machine with extra reel affecting pay out

(57) An AWP gaming machine has a set of main reels 2 and a supplementary reel 3 which is arranged to spin with the main reels but in a totally random fashion. The supplementary reel 3 carries symbols which indicate and determine incremental change to a prize value displayed upon a panel 5. This prize will be awarded following achievement of a particular result on the main reels 2 or of a feature 7 accessed by achievement of that particular result.

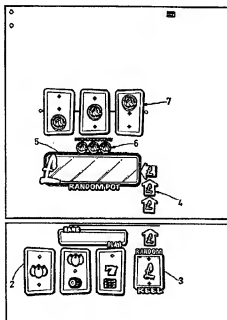


Fig. 1

At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

The claims were filed later than the filing date but within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1996.

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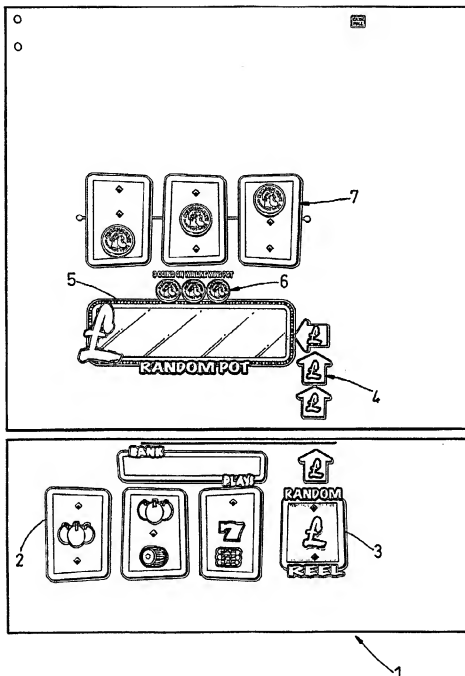


Fig. 1

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"Prize Award Gaming Machine"

One type of gaming machine is referred to as an amusement-with-prizes machine, particularly known as a fruit machine. Machines of this type have a number of
5 reels or drums, or equivalents such as endless bands hereinafter referred to generally as "reels", which are spun and then stop in a variable manner to reveal a combination of symbols in display windows. Certain combinations result in prizes, usually monetary, being
10 awarded. Such machines will be referred to generally as AWP machines.

The reels are generally driven by stepper motors operating under software control from the machine "game board". It has become standard practice to control the
15 stopping position of reels to give the appearance of random operation whilst maintaining the financial performance of the machine. The operation/action of percentage control of machines is the subject of many Patent Applications.

It is an object of this invention to provide a machine
20 of the above type with an enhanced award system that will attract potential users.

According to the present invention there is provided an AWP machine having a supplementary reel which is arranged to spin with the main reels but in a totally
25 random fashion, the supplementary reel carrying symbols which indicate and determine incremental change to a displayed prize value which will be awarded following

achievement of a particular result on the main reels or of a feature accessed by achievement of that result.

When such a machine is used the displayed prize values will be on continuous display and potential users will note that that prize is available, subject to achieving a suitable combination of symbols on the main reels. This machine differs from earlier machines in a significant way, namely that the displayed prize fund is built up as a result of a purely random spinning of the supplementary reel, which is not subject to the usual percentage control features of prior machines.

In its simplest form, the supplementary reel will carry a sequence of symbol locations at least some of which indicate an increase in value to be applied to the displayed prize value. If desired, some of the symbol locations could indicate a decrease in the value to be applied to the displayed prize value. It would be important, however, to ensure that the potential increase values overall exceed the potential decrease values, since otherwise the prize fund, over a period of a number of games, will not appear to increase in value.

As a modification of the system the machine could be changed such that said particular result will provide access to a further AWP machine mechanism, operation of which displays symbols wherein at least one combination thereof determines award of said displayed prize value. Spinning of the reels of the further AWP machine mechanism

could be arranged to be totally random also. In this modified form of machine it may be desired to allow for other combinations of symbols on the reels of the further AWP machine mechanism to indicate the award of prizes other than the displayed prize value.

The invention may be performed in various ways and a preferred example thereof will now be described, with reference to the accompanying Figure 1 which illustrates a diagrammatic layout of symbols and features of a gaming machine of this invention.

The drawing shows a standard AWP machine section 1 incorporating the usual reels 2 carrying symbols. When the reels are spun certain combinations achieved at the end of the spinning can give prizes. This section 1 also incorporates a supplementary reel 3 that will be spun in a totally random manner every time that a game is played. If a f symbol is illustrated anywhere in the central line, then this will cause lighting up of a trail of arrows 4 to a display panel 5, which will indicate an accumulating value for a prize fund, referred to as a "random pot". The value of this "random pot" will be awarded to the player if three specific symbols stop on the win line of the reels 2. As a variation, the reel 3 could carry symbols such as +1, +2, -1 and -2, which will indicate the amount by which the prize value in the "random pot" would be increased or decreased during each game.

Another modification involves the incorporation of a further set of reels 7 of an AWP machine mechanism. These could be accessed for play by the user upon achievement of a particular set of symbols on the reels 2. The user will then operate the reels 7 in the hope that a specific combination of symbols will be achieved on the central line of the reel 7 to enable the award of the prize fund indicated in the "random pot". A possible row of winning symbols 6 is illustrated. It is preferred that the reels 7 would operate in a totally random fashion rather than the usual method of operation ensuring a percentage control of the outcome of play of the AWP machine 1 utilising the reels 2. The reels 7 could also create combinations of symbols that would award prizes other than the prize indicated in the "random pot".

It will be appreciated that the symbols and decorative features shown in the drawings can be modified as desired and that the concepts described can be extended to other implementations or layouts and could also be created using video technology.

CLAIMS

1. An AWP gaming machine provided with a supplementary reel which is arranged to spin with the main reels but in a totally random fashion, the supplementary reel carrying symbols which indicate and determine incremental change to a displayed prize value which will be awarded following achievement of a particular result on the main reels or of a feature accessed by achievement of that particular result.
2. A gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the supplementary reel carries a sequence of symbol locations at least some of which indicate an increase in value to be applied to the displayed prize value.
3. A gaming machine according to claim 2, wherein some of the symbol locations indicate a decrease in the value to be applied to the displayed prize value.
4. A gaming machine according to any one of claims 1 or 3, wherein said particular result provides access to a further AWP machine mechanism, operation of which displays symbols wherein at least one combination thereof determines award of said displayed prize value.
5. A gaming machine according to claim 4, wherein spinning of the reels of the further AWP machine mechanism is arranged to be totally random.
6. A gaming machine according to claim 4 or claim 5, wherein combinations of symbols other than said one combination achieved on the reels of the further AWP

machine mechanism indicate the award of prizes other than the displayed prize value.

7. An AWP gaming machine substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

- 5 8. Any novel combination of features of an AWP gaming machine as described herein and/or as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.



Application No: GB 0129769.6
Claims searched: 1-7

Examiner: Bridie Collier
Date of search: 9 May 2003

Patents Act 1977 : Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
A		GB 2153572 A (ARTHUR) See further reel 30
A		GB 2096376 A (BARCREST) See gamble indicator 15
A		US 6089978 A (ANCHOR) See bonus wheel 70
A		DE 2938307 A (GAUSELMANN) See extra drum 28

Categories:

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
& Member of the same patent family	E Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

Field of Search:

Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC²:

G4V

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC²:

G07F

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report:

WPI, EPODOC, JAPIO